

REMARKS

1. Interview with Examiner

The applicants' counsel appreciates the opportunity to consult regarding this response with the Examiner on April 29, 2003. During the interview, the cited DURAFLEX and Huckenbeck references were discussed, along with U.S. Patent No. 6,161,266.

The lanyard shown in the previously cited Photographs (taken October 2000) of lanyard (cited as reference A62 in the November 23, 2001 information disclosure statement) was also discussed. On information and belief, such lanyards (as well as lanyards depicted in the Snugz USA Product Catalog, January 1999, pages 10, 12, "Retention with Style"), were sold prior to August 2000 and included, on information and belief, male and female clamshell body portions which had respective internal components such as upper and lower teeth (see numerals 318, 320) and interlocking ridges and grooves (see numerals 326, 327). Similar internal components are illustrated in Figure 2 of this application, serial no. 09/931,392. The clamshell body portions were connected by being sandwiched onto respective lanyard substrate ends by breaking or bending junctures connecting the clamshell body portions.

The Option "L" Slide Release Attachment lanyard shown on page 5 of the SNUGZ USA Product Catalog January, 2000 ("Proudly Made in the USA") was also discussed. On information and belief, such lanyards were sold prior to August 2000 and included, on information and belief, the clamshell lanyard connector described above in the immediately preceding paragraph selectively coupled as shown on the catalog page 5 to the Slide Release Attachment shown on page 5, which included (i) a male Slide Release Attachment portion having the oval shaped press button shown; selectively coupled to (ii) a female Slide Release Attachment portion (located lower than the yellow line on p. 5) having a slot therein, as shown,

that selectively receives an interlocking tab and has a split neck extending therefrom. The tab, which selectively couples the male Slide Release portion to the female Slide Release portion, was connected to, and moveable in and out of the slot by selective movement of, the press button. The split neck (shown in p. 5 as being connected to an O-ring attachment) was selectively coupled to an attachment.

2. Response

As discussed with the Examiner, the Applicants' lanyard connector system relates to a male buckle portion that has protuberances that couple into a female buckle portion. The female buckle portion is coupled to first and second substrate ends. Since the male buckle portion couples into the female buckle portion, the male buckle portion and the attachments connected thereto can be conveniently decoupled from the female buckle portion in a single step process.

For example, if an identification badge coupled to an attachment becomes accidentally caught within an industrial machine, for example, that is pulling the identification badge toward the machine, the wearer of the applicants' device can immediately release the badge, attachment and dual male component by squeezing against the protuberances. This single action will release the badge/attachment/dual male component assembly and acts as a convenient safety release.

On the other hand, the wearer of the Mod-U-Lox system must first squeeze against the Mod-U-Lux buckles, thereby contacting the female component with the wearer's fingers, then release the female component from the wearer's fingers. The Mod-U-Lox system thus requires a two-step process, rather than the applicants' one step process.

The applicants' one-handed, single step decoupling process is possible in light of the claimed orientation of the male and female lanyard connector body components and the orientation of the coupling portion on the male component.

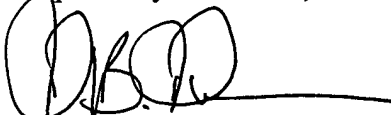
The amendments to the claims have a basis in the specification, such as on page 17, paragraph 70, and Figures 1, 2 and 5 and on page 13, paragraph 58.

CONCLUSION

In view of the discussion and amendments submitted herein, the Applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending claims is now in condition for allowance. Therefore, reconsideration of the rejection is requested and allowance of those claims is respectfully solicited. In the event that the Examiner find any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that can be clarified by a telephonic interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to initiate the same with the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 29th day of April, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. B. Dellenbach', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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